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DE RUEHKH #0264 0331555
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 021555Z FEB 06
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1276
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY 0001

UNCLAS KHARTOUM 000264

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR S/ES, AF/FO, AF/RSA, AND AF/SPG
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KCRM](#) [SOCI](#) [PTER](#) [DA](#) [NO](#) [US](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: ANTI-DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL PROTEST SUGGESTS
GOVERNMENT PROVOCATION

¶1. (SBU) On February 2, an angry crowd of approximately 100 students surrounded the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and Agencies Coordinating Together (ACT)/CARITAS (which houses Norwegian NGOs) compounds in Nyala, South Darfur, and stoned several vehicles at 10:00 in the morning. The NGO staff were able to find shelter in nearby offices of the UN and/or NGOs; none was injured. The protest is linked to the recent controversy over the publication by a Danish publication of cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed in a derogatory manner. Following the event, the UN broadcast a message advising all NGOs to remain inside their compounds due to tensions in town. USAID notes that all Darfur Field Office personnel are accounted for and safe.

¶2. (SBU) The UN Field Security Coordination Office in Khartoum issued a security advisory on the afternoon of February 2 directing staff to minimize non-essential movement, maintain radio contact, avoid the city center and demonstrations, and carry UN identification cards at all times. The office also noted that additional demonstrations are expected following Friday prayers.

¶3. (SBU) According to the February 2 edition of Arabic language daily newspaper Al-Watan, an organization called "Forum Defending Prophet Mohamed" has asked Muslims to participate in a February 3 "mosques demonstration" to denounce Norwegian and Danish publications depicting the Prophet disparagingly. The demonstrations are to be followed by a march to the UN offices; the protesters are asked to call for the expulsion of Norwegian and Danish organizations from Sudan.

¶4. (SBU) On January 31, according the government Sudan News Agency (SUNA) stated that President Bashir had instructed the Ministry of Defense to reject a request to visit Sudan by the Danish Minister of Defense due to the derogatory cartoons. He affirmed that no Danish officials would be permitted to visit Sudan until the Danish government issued an apology to the Islamic world. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reportedly urged Sudanese companies to cease dealings and financial transactions immediately with Danish companies in protest. The article concluded by mentioning that there is no diplomatic representation between Denmark and Sudan.

¶5. (SBU) This incident hearkens to the January 17 anti-West protest rally in El Fasher, wherein reportedly 2,000 youths demonstrated in front of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) compound. The North Darfur governor addressed the crowd, denouncing efforts to deploy international forces in Darfur. The occasion included the burning of U.S. and UN flags.

¶6. (SBU) Comment: The Danish cartoon incident has provided

the opportunity for anti-Western protest in Darfur, at a time of heightened Sudanese sensitivities with regard to their sovereignty: blaming the West (U.S.) for Sudan's non-accession to the AU presidency; Kofi Annan's statements about needing much more robust peacekeeping (read "internationalization") in Darfur; and the beginning of serious planning for AMIS-UN rehatting. The recent incident in Darfur against the Danish NGO was no doubt instigated by the government. We will remain vigilant to any increase in violence, and will issue a warden notice, considering the possibility of inflammatory statements from the mosques on Friday.

HUME